

**MINUTES OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM MEETING
2 FEBRUARY 2023**

HELD AT THE COUNTRYSIDE CENTRE, WORCESTER

Attendees

Lyndon Bracewell (LB)	Cycling interest
John Cuthbertson (JC)	Social inclusion interest
Stephen Glazzard (SG)	Motorised use of minor highways and byways interest
Julian Grubb (JG)	Waterways Interest
Rowena Hayward (RH)	Representing Worcestershire County Council PRoW
Peter Hughes (PH)	Business interest
Tony Kerbey (TK)	Secretary
Bobbie Matulja (BM)	Chair
Linda Robinson (LR)	South Worcestershire District Council interest
Sandra Starkey (SS)	Youth Interest

Notices – Procedure in the event of a fire, trip hazards in the meeting room and consent to record.

ITEMS

1. Apologies

Georgina Britten Long	Landowner Interest
Mike Rouse	County Council Cabinet member
Glyn Thomas	Walking Interest

2. Declaration of Interests

The Chair asked members to declare any personal or business interest in the listed agenda items – LB declared a voluntary interest in the Rail Trails project.

3. Confirmation of Minutes.

The Chair asked members to confirm the minutes of the previous meeting 7 July 2022 – **carried.**

4. Actions.

There were no outstanding actions. RH outlined the tacit agreement with IPROW regarding 'Waymark' magazine. LAF members will be given access to a PDF version of the magazine for LAF use only. **Post-meeting note** – A copy will be distributed with these minutes.

5. Matters Arising

Project Updates

Worcester Bromyard Leominster Greenway Project (Provided by Tom Fisher) – Main progress in Herefordshire where County Council have funded a feasibility study. The study estimated the construction costs (£6.6M for Herefordshire section) and the benefit/cost ratio (6:1 high). Inter-county linkages and detailed landowner engagement are planned for future phases. WCC have now provided £10k of which could be used for the Worcestershire feasibility study, estimated to cost £15k (£19k with VAT). The BHS and local cycling clubs have been approached for additional funding. Website at: [WBLGreenway](#)

8 Hills Regional Park Project – A spatial framework is being developed, links and questionnaires were sent to stakeholders and re-distributed to LAF members for comment/action. Engagement with landowners to create a business case to access the Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund will begin soon. Website at: [8 Hills Regional Park | Worcestershire | National Trust](#) **Action (TK)** – inform NT of problems accessing the video link in the January update. (Completed 6 Mar 23). **Post meeting note** – NT said that the video is now out of date and all current information can be found in the brochure, accessed via a link at the bottom of the 8 Hills webpage.

LB Mentioned the West Midlands circular walk – awaiting formal consultation (included as a topic for future meetings).

BHS Gates Trial – 5 gate types are now installed at the test site and a 6th gate, more suitable for disabled users, will be added soon. Final selection of the gate/s will depend on safety, ease of use, accessibility and ongoing maintenance liability. JC has mapped the Gate trial location using 'Outdoor Active' at <https://out.ac/3v7uMp>. The page includes descriptions and images of the gates.

6. Speakers

The Trail Riders Fellowship (TRF) activities and code of conduct - Stephen Glazzard (SG)

SG delivered an interesting presentation on the history, activities and aims of the Trail Riders Fellowship (a pdf version of the slides are attached to these minutes). Questions were taken covering:

- **Rider group sizes and consideration of equestrian users (LR)** – Normally 6 – 8 riders in a group and it is TRF practice to slow, stop and switch off engines when passing horses. Most surface damage seems to be caused by 4 x 4 vehicles and SG outlined the use of intelligent Traffic Restriction Orders (TRO) and Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO).
- **Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs¹) and District Councils (LB)**. A point was made about the duration of PSPOs and the importance of enforcement if they are to be extended.
- **Legal status of Byways and how they are changed (JG)** – SG deferred to RH regarding legislation and relevant authority. RH provided a brief outline of the legal mechanisms available.
- **Identifying badges for TRF members (TK)** – SG has a small metal badge fixed to the motorcycle near the headlight but there is no convention.
- **DMMOs, List of Streets and UUCRs** – Effect of Deregulation Act on the TRF and merits of UUCR vs BOAT.

Rail Trails Worcestershire - Lyndon Bracewell (LB)

LB gave an informative outline of this collaborative project to link Worcestershire railway lines/stations and walking routes supported by maps and information sheets (a PDF version

¹ Local Government Association Guidance regarding PSPOs - [PSPOs Guidance for Councils](#)

of the slides are attached to these minutes) Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership website is at: [Rail Trails – Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership \(wcrp.org.uk\)](http://wcrp.org.uk).

Questions were taken covering:

- **Public and Active Transport Connectivity (LR)** – This was recently discussed by Wychavon District Council and LR will seek to promote the initiative internally.
- **Accessibility of print on the example leaflet (JC)**. LB acknowledged the point but explained that the leaflets could be accessed online or downloaded to a device.
- **Is the Wye to Thames River walk still active (SS)**. LB pointed SS to the Long Distance Walkers Association Website ([Wye to the Thames - LDWA Long Distance Paths](#)).
- **Use of canal towpaths and waterways in the north of the county (SG)**. Canal towpaths are used between Hartlebury and Kidderminster and on the 'Salt Line' route between Foregate Street, Worcester, Droitwich, Bromsgrove and Alvechurch.

7. Public Rights of Way Team Report

RH provided an update on the activities of the WCC PRoW team. A PDF version of the report is attached for LAF members. Statistics are valid up to the end of December 2022. Questions were taken covering:

- **Accessibility of the new railway crossing bridge at Barnt Green/Cofton Hackett (JC)**. It is not accessible to wheelchair users or those with limited mobility but was a Network Rail construction prior to the diversion. However, it is now much safer than the previous ad-hoc crossing point at track level.
- **Cost recovery for PPOs that resolve historic planning failures (LR)**. In most cases the costs for these orders are met by the private applicant. Today, they are caught a lot earlier in the process with the aim of making sure developers are liable, where appropriate.
- **Guidance for volunteers on accessibility considerations (JC)**. **Action (RH)** – Check volunteer documents for accessibility guidance.
- **Is it a legal requirement to make the paths accessible (LR)?** RH explained that we are steadily trying to improve accessibility and take every opportunity to do so.
- **The Chair congratulated the PRoW team on their work.**

8. Items for Noting

New WLAF web page as part of the County Council's main website was still in its development stage. The Chair mentioned difficulties whilst attempting to navigate the pages. **Post-meeting note** – The site is now live at: [Public rights of way | Worcestershire County Council](#)

PH would like to see a library of historic agendas/minutes. **Action (TK)** – to investigate adding the documents to the WLAF page.

JC asked if there had been any movement on a British Standard for bridges. RH explained that ADEPT regional groups are discussing such a standard but nothing concrete has been produced.

9. Topics for Future Meetings

- ROWIP Development.
- De-Regulation Act and impact on PRow.
- The West Midlands Walking Trail.
- Canal & River Trust Access and Conservation.
- Results of BHS Gates Trial.
- Duckworth Worcestershire Trust – General and conservation vs public access.

10. Any Other Business

SS asked LB if the Rail Trails leaflets could be designed with the guidance points and maps on the same side.

Non-attending members, policy and practice. **Action (TK)** – Investigate guidance documents and terms of reference.

11. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that moving the meeting to a Wednesday might give elected members a little more freedom to attend. Dates on a Wednesday in July 2023 will be circulated.